

Jon Stoner  
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March 13, 2015

RE: Written testimony in support of S.B. No. 1055 (Raised) An Act Concerning Gifted and Talented, for Joint Committee on Education Public Hearing, March 11, 2015

Dear Education Committee,

I am the parent of two highly capable teenagers, one of whom has been diagnosed with ADHD – and medicated appropriately – since fourth grade. My wife and I have become adept at navigating the school system, competing for resources, and dealing with IEPs and teachers/administrators who are equipped -- and some who are very clearly not – to deal with children such as ours. We know firsthand, the importance of having programs and properly trained personnel on staff to deal with the full range of their students' capabilities and situations, from advanced learning curriculums to the social and emotional needs of a frustrated and sensitive ADHD student. It is a recognized phenomena know as "twice exceptional" or "2E, " which sees up to 33% of all gifted/talented students afflicted with accompanying disabilities such as ADHD, Dyslexia and others (Baum, 1985).

I am surprised and saddened that over 1/3 of Connecticut's school districts do not report identifying gifted and talented students, in violation of CGS statute Section 10-76d. In the past, Connecticut was the leading state in the country for providing gifted and talented students the services they require. Almost every district had a wide range of programs and services for high potential students, including those from low income groups. Due to state-level cutbacks in both funding and leadership, only 1/3 of the districts today provide for these young people who should all be going on to make significant contributions to the state and national economies and collective brain trusts.

I am asking that you support Senate Bill No. 1055, an act concerning Gifted and Talented Students. While a small step in a much larger agenda for further addressing services for Connecticut's gifted and talented students, it is nonetheless a necessary and important one.

If our school system is to truly provide a full and fair education for everyone, then we must address them all, including those with disabilities, and those at both the lower and higher ends of achievement.

We are a voting family of two adults and two school-age children. Please fully support this bill as a first step in rebuilding our state's dedication to gifted and talented learning.

Many thanks,

Jon Stoner  
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